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Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Nuclear disarmament and reducing the danger of nuclear war

Working paper submitted by China

1. Eliminating the danger of nuclear war, and ultimately the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons and the attainment of a nuclear-weapon-free world, serve the common interests and benefits of humankind.

2. In the spirit of jointly building a community of shared future for mankind through consultation, the international community should advocate and pursue common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, fully respect and accommodate the legitimate and reasonable security concerns of all countries, resolve international disputes through peaceful means and work to foster a peaceful and stable international security environment and create the conditions necessary for progress in nuclear disarmament.

3. It is important to adhere to multilateralism, maintain and promote the authority, universality and effectiveness of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and adhere and give full play to the role of the existing multilateral mechanisms, including the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, so as to provide legal support and institutional guarantees for the nuclear disarmament process.

4. At the beginning of a new Non-Proliferation Treaty review cycle, all parties should seize this opportunity, by taking positive measures and enhancing dialogue and mutual trust, to continually implement the action plan , which was adopted by the 2010 Review Conference, in a comprehensive and balanced manner. The relationship between nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be handled properly so that the three pillars of the Non-Proliferation Treaty might be upheld in a balanced way.

5. All nuclear-weapon States should be committed to the complete prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons, fulfil their nuclear disarmament obligations under article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty in earnest and publicly undertake not to seek permanent possession of nuclear weapons.

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6. Nuclear disarmament should follow the principles of "maintaining the global strategic stability" and "undiminished security for all", and be pursued in a step-by-step manner:

(a) Development and deployment of missile defence systems detrimental to global stability, as well as the related international cooperation in this regard, should be stopped and abandoned immediately, so as not to hamper the international nuclear disarmament efforts;

(b) Prevention of the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space will be conducive to maintaining global strategic balance and stability and to creating an international security environment necessary for nuclear disarmament;

(c) It is necessary to strengthen pre-emptive arms control diplomacy and contain the trend of weaponization in the fields of cyberspace and artificial intelligence so as to prevent the high-tech arms race from aggravating the international strategic imbalance.

7. Countries possessing the largest nuclear arsenals bear special and primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament and should take the lead in substantially reducing those arsenals in a verifiable, irreversible and legally binding manner, thus creating the conditions necessary for the ultimate goal of general and comprehensive nuclear disarmament. When conditions are ripe, other nuclear-weapon States should also join the multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

8. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is an important step in the nuclear disarmament process. Countries that have not yet done so should sign and ratify that Treaty as soon as possible so that it may enter into force as stipulated by its relevant provisions at the earliest opportunity. Pending the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty , nuclear-weapon States should continue to observe their moratoriums on nuclear testing.

9. The Conference on Disarmament is the only appropriate forum for the negotiation of a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Reaching agreement on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work in the Conference on Disarmament to start the negotiations on fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of the Shannon report (CD/1299) is the only feasible way out. Besides, the universal participation of all key parties is essential for the preparation and negotiation of the treaty to achieve results. The United Nations high-level expert preparatory group on fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices should conduct its work strictly in accordance with its mandate defined in the relevant General Assembly resolution.

10. As a long-term goal, the international community should develop, at the appropriate juncture, a viable long-term plan comprising phased actions, including the conclusion of a convention on the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons so as to eventually achieve complete and thorough nuclear disarmament under effective international supervision by taking concrete and feasible measures.

11. At the current stage, all nuclear-weapon States should take the following measures to reduce the danger of nuclear war and improve the level of mutual trust among States:

(a) To reduce the role of nuclear weapons in national security doctrines and abandon the nuclear deterrence policy based on first use of nuclear weapons, commit themselves to no first use of nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstances;

(b) Honour their commitments not to target their nuclear weapons at any countries or to list any countries as targets of nuclear strikes;

(c) Explicitly undertake unconditionally to commit not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones and to negotiate and conclude international legal instruments on the issues of negative security assurance and no first use of nuclear weapons;

(d) Support the efforts of relevant countries and regions in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and other weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zones in accordance with the regional conditions and on the basis of voluntary consultations and agreements;

(e) Abandon the nuclear umbrella policy and the practice of nuclear sharing; countries that deploy nuclear weapons abroad should withdraw and repatriate all such weapons;

(f) Take all steps necessary to avoid accidental or unauthorized launches of nuclear weapons.

12. Achieving the universality of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and enhancing its authority and effectiveness are of extreme importance. Countries that have not yet done so should unconditionally accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States at an early date. The relevant Security Council resolutions should be implemented in a comprehensive, non-discriminatory and effective manner.